Excellence at Thiruvananthapuram. The proposal seeks a financial assistance of Rs. 30 lakhs for land development, building infrastructure, machineries, training and skill upgradation, construction of demonstration and display units, etc.

(c) The proposal submitted by the Karala State Nirmithi Kendra has been referred to the State Government for necessary comments.

Setting up of the National Rainfed Area Authority

3983. MR. PRAMILA BOHIDAR :
SHRI B.J. PANDA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to set up a National Rainfed Area Authority which would help to minimize the dependency on rains of the unirrigated areas :

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is total dependency of our agriculture on rains; and

(d) how for it is proposed to be minimized through assured water irrigation coverage and improved water management practices under the above project, especially with reference to Orissa ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA) : (a) National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) has been established *vide* Government Order dated 3rd November, 2006.

(b) NRAA has a two tier structure. The first tier is the Governing Board that will provide necessary leadership and appropriate coordination in implementation of Programmes. The Governing Board is chaired by the Union Agriculture Minister and co-chaired by the Union Rural Development Minister. The second tier is the Executive Committee consisting of technical experts and representatives from stakeholder Ministries .The Executive Committee is headed by a full time CEO and will also have five other full time technical experts. The mandate of the Authority are :

1. To prepare a perspective plan outlining the national strategy and road map for holistic and sustainable development of rainfed farming areas.

2. To evolve common guidelines for all schemes of different Ministries including EAPs for development of Rainfed/Dry land Farming systems.

3. To coordinate and bring convergence within and among agricultural and wasteland development programmes being implemented in rainfed areas of the country.

4. To identify rainfed areas in different States which need priority attention and prepare watershed development programmes for integrated natural resource management in consultation with States, focusing on multi-dimensional crop, livestock, horticulture, agripasture integrated systems and programmes for landless farming communities.

5. To identify gaps in input supply, credit availability, dissemination of appropriate technology and other requirements relvant for rainfed areas.

6. Guide the implementing agencies on priority setting and monitor the specific interventions required.

7. To develop plans/programmes for capacity building of Centre/ State Government functionaries in rainfed areas.

8. To suggest modalities to strengthen National and State Level Institutions concerned with Rainfed/Dry land areas, and establish institutional linkages with prioritized watersheds.

9. Monitor disbursement of rural credit/insurance cover/safety net programmes developed for rainfed areas.

10. Set the research agenda including a critical appraisal of on-going programmes and promote diffusion of required knowledge for integrated farming in rainfed areas to district and lower level authorities.

11. To evaluate the effectiveness of completed watersheds and concurrent evaluation of ongoing programmes.

(c) As per statistics available 60% of cultivable land is under rainfed agriculture.

(d) In Orissa, out of total cultivated area of 79.75 lakh Ha. the net irrigated area is 20.90 lakh Ha. The NRAA is a policy making and advisory body aimed at bringing coordination and synergy among watershed programmes. Its mandate does not include creation of assured irrigation potential. However, the Government has already taken up various watershed development programmes through which water harvesting and moisture conservation measures are taken up along with other activities to provide life saving and supplementary irrigation. In the state under watershed programmes. 11.26 lakh Ha. area has been developed at a cost of Rs. 531.12 crores.

Sale of cereals, pulses and coarse grains below MSP

3984. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of farmers are even now selling their harvest of cereals, pulses, coarse grains and oil seeds at prices below the MSP;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and Government's reaction in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have discouraged the production of pulses and oil seeds in the country by not making an increase in their MSP; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Government fixes the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for various agricultural commodities, taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of the State Governments and concerned Central Ministries as well as other relevant factors, which in the opinion of the Government, are important for fixation of MSPs. The MSP thus fixed is a guaranteed minimum price which the farmers are offered by the designated Central and State agencies in the event market prices tend to fall below that level. However, if the market price is more than the MSP fixed by the